

Victoria Street Newz

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we print"*

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Where Did We Come From? Where Have We all Gone?

by Brian Mason



I've been rereading Canadian history lately. There are more than a few lessons to be learned there. Of course, I'm among the first to decry what the imperialist powers did to the indigenous peoples and this land. Yet, within the narrative of colonisation and exploitation, another story can be found. It's that we used to be a nation of serious protesters whenever we felt government had let us down. Those were the days when government feared the people, not the other way around. Today, the situation has been stood on its head, giving us the worst possible combination of political circumstances, a government not interested in governing and citizens unmotivated to act up.

The strains of Canadian radicalism appeared long before confederation, and most of us are familiar with the names if not the details or causes involved. The rebellions of 1837 in Upper and Lower Canada; the burning of the parliament buildings in Montreal in 1849 over the Rebellion Losses Bill; uprisings at Red River (and the establishing of a provisional government), Duck Lake, and Batoche; the struggle for French-Canadian nationalism under Mercier and the National Party; mass anti-conscription demonstrations in Quebec near the end of the First World War; and the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 are some of the major ones.

continued on page 3

About Street Newz

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**1027 Pandora Ave
Coast Salish Territory
Victoria, B.C., V8V 3P6**

**250-383-5144 ext 0137
streetnewz@islandnet.com**

Street Newz archives, and more information about us, can be found at

relativenewz.ca



just another rant janinebandcroft.blogspot.com

On October 30th our quiet city, formerly known as a place for the newly wed and the nearly dead, sprang to life as the Great Olympic Torch began its run around the world.

Scores of people lined the parade route to honour the journey of a torch (actually many thousands of torches, some already available on eBay), in a tradition that began in Berlin, 1936. Yes, the torch relay (as previously reported in the *Street Newz* and elsewhere), was invented by Nazis.

Now I am not a career journalist. I did not study at the sacrosanct School of Media Spin. I was not indoctrinated into the official College of Objectivity, tasked with the impossible. The *Victoria Street Newz* emerged after years of study & engagement in social justice and environmental activism, after decades of reading about rallies I'd attended but couldn't recognize in the after stories.

I am a student of Life. I have opinions, grounded in knowledge, tried by wisdom ... and I don't try to feign objectivity.

Through Literature I learned about European intellectuals who fostered revolutionary thoughts with pamphlets they published and distributed. In History and Women's Studies I learned about political structures propped up on hierarchical and patriarchal pedestals, with stories remembering war's victors while the victimization of women and children is dismissed, ignored or, at worst, justified. I learned the Science of billions of years of evolution, and respect for wild earth. In Math I was taught to formulate toxic half-life with graphs of nuclear waste that never quite reach zero. Never. And Education taught me that it's one thing to theorize about radical changes we need to survive on this earth, and quite another to bring alternative thought into a classroom.

Life, of course, has been the greatest teacher. I am not a journalist, but I did bear witness on October 30th.

These Games Are Not About Athletics

The corporate media's focus on individual athletes provides a convenient distraction from the land grab and theft that accompanies modern day Olympics.

Chris Shaw, author of [Five Ring Circus: Myths and Realities of the Olympic Games](#), warned us that the games have evolved to become a "corporate assault on our communities." It's about real estate - EagleRidge, for example. Just drive the new highway, through the wilderness that native elder Harriet Nahanee was jailed for defending, and see the changes. "These are projects the developers wanted for many years," Chris explains, "and the Olympics was the magic pixie dust they had to sprinkle on the citizenry" to gain approval for "privatized profit, and socialized debt." (youtube.com/watch?v=Z7_RnrTfe0c). We pay, they get the profit.

According to Wikipedia, the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics were the first to introduce private corporate funding. A pattern of enormous debt had resulted in a "low level of interest among cities, and this was seen as a "major threat to the future of the Olympic Games."

Chris Shaw explains that the IOC (International Olympic Committee) was never a particularly democratic organization, but it officially became a business in 1984 when television marketing rights were introduced.

All of this begs the question: If corporate participation was introduced to offset public debt, why do the games cost us so much?

Unlike the alternative media, which holds collaborative fundraising events and shares information freely amongst each other, the corporate media, charged with providing exclusive coverage to secure their corporate advertising dollars, seem more concerned with who owns which information rather than ensuring the public has access to it.

Neither Fair, Nor Balanced

After the October 30th event I learned that a



teenager, Nicholas Dronsfield, lives with cerebral palsy and was disappointed when he was unable to carry a torch. According to some corporate media, Nicholas' disappointment is the direct consequence of protestors who blocked his path.

This raises several questions, in my mind: Were protest organizers aware of each individual torch carrier and, if so, did they intentionally choose to kill Nicholas' opportunity? After the protest parade's intended route to the Legislature was announced at the corner of Quadra and Yates, why wasn't a corporate or police vehicle dispatched to carry Nicholas to a different part of the torch route? Perhaps none of the other torch bearers were willing to give up their place to allow Nicholas an opportunity to participate? Or, and I hesitate to ponder that such sinister motives might exist, is it possible that Nicholas was intentionally denied so that corporate journalists could paint a particularly cruel picture of the Olympic dissenters?

Another article in the Times Colonialist was titled "Protesters make no apologies for disrupting relay," implying that each of the approximately 500 protestors were asked their opinion. The article goes on to then quote a single individual, Chris Shaw, whose response is of course an educated and enlightened one, but it is one response that is attributed by the corporate media to reflect the thoughts of every single protestor. And, of course, all of Chris Shaw's research has been silenced by the corporate media.

I feel empathy for Nicholas. It's unfortunate that he lost his chance to carry a torch, even more unfortunate that he likely has no idea the history of the torch relay. He's probably also unaware of the droves of handicapped who have been injured at their work places and rendered homeless and/or poor after their workers' compensation and employment insurance runs out - *Street Newz* vendors among them.

Many thousands of disabled people live in BC with undocumented disappointment, watching as our social safety net is systematically dismantled by a corporate government that cares not for society's disadvantaged except, it seems, when there's an opportunity to use one to discredit others.

No Violence, So Make Something Up

Though anti-olympic protestors sometimes disagree about tactics (some perhaps advocating violence to corporate equipment to protect ancient forests, others insisting on non violent civil disobedience), one thing is clear - the peaceful tactics of the day disarmed the corporate media.

Surrounded by police of all stripes armed to the teeth, including a fleet of goggled horses (can you say "animal cruelty"?), transported from Vancouver, protestors were loud and disruptive to traffic, but extremely peaceful.

I witnessed one person (and I hesitate to call him a protester), as the parade left Centennial Square to commence its walk through the city, run like a mad man and bang on the windows of the little locally owned quilt shop at Figgard and Government streets. My immediate

thought? Provocateur.

I witnessed another person, while we stood stopped on Cook St., drop a handful of marbles on the road. My first thought? Provocateur. I have no way of proving this, except to reflect on Paul Manley's video capture of agents provocateurs planted into a crowd of peaceful protesters at the 2007 SPP (Security and Prosperity Partnership) rally in Montebello Quebec. We know that provocateurs exist, and we know that Olympic police, when questioned, would not confirm that such tactics would not be used.

My first thought, after reading the TC report "Protesters also threw marbles at the feet of horses used by the Vancouver police mounted squad"? Liars. Unless there was another marble incident, which Legal Observer David Eby assures me there was not, I can attest that the horses were stopped, about 50 metres away from where the marbles were dropped, not thrown, by a single individual, not "protestors," near my feet. Several of us commented about the stupidity of this, and began collecting or moving the marbles so the horses would not be harmed.

I do not know those two individuals, whose tactics differ so much from the protestors I know. My friends would never harm animals (except maybe to eat them now and then) and certainly have no axe to grind about a locally owned quilt shop. I don't know the two, I don't recognize the logic of their actions, and so I have to ask - are they provocateurs? And if so, why does the corporate media tell lies when it ought to be doing investigative journalism? What do they teach in journalism school, anyway?

We know that at least 1300 single occupancy rooms in Vancouver have been renovated to make room for Olympic occupants. That's 1300 evictions, 1300 low income housing units forever lost. We're also seeing funding cuts to everything from the arts, to hospitals and schools - are those monies transferred directly to the Games? Why should those of us who work hard and pay our taxes subsidize an elitist party that few of us care to or can afford to participate in? What's the contribution from highly profitable corporate sponsors, except to benefit from lots of free advertising thanks to the media they employ?

The Olympics Are Lousy House Guests

My mother taught me two very important things:

1. Clean up your room before you play, and
2. Be a good house guest - don't go unless asked, don't invade privacy, clean up after yourself, and leave a thank you gift.

The Olympics are breaking two cardinal rules: they insist that we sweep our mess under the rug and make it invisible rather than cleaning it up properly, then they pave our wilderness, steal from our purse, and play frivolous games while ignoring the messy details of homeless children. If they were to offer a tiny portion of their enormous profits or publicity as a parting gift, perhaps we wouldn't protest so much.

I am not a professional journalist, but from where I sit I see that the Olympics are lousy house guests. Maybe that's why they don't get invited back.

Where Have We all Gone?
 continued from cover

In comparison, the securitized Canada of 2009, tied tightly down like a Gulliver by police, spy, and border security agencies, is an invalid. There seems to be little of the fighting spirit left. We are accepting of every indignity, from the dismantling of government services, to the export of our economy (and self-sufficiency) overseas, to climate change. We do next to nothing except go shopping and watch our huge, flat TV screens. Protests attract the same small tired bunch of concerned citizens, all closely watched and recorded by the security agencies who have doubtlessly infiltrated their organizations as well. Even the Raging Grannies look tired, and the activist organizations cowed.

Knowledge is no longer power (as used to be the mantra) but disabling, especially when it comes in endless doses from questionable, remote sources. The internet, widely seen as a kind of enabler of “spontaneous” protests such as the Battle in Seattle, mostly keeps citizens busily blogging to one another. There is no substitute for getting out there.

Yet nothing seems to ignite us anymore. Perhaps most people don’t foresee problems. Or maybe they’re overwhelmed and don’t know what to believe. More likely, people don’t want to upset their little corner of the world no matter what, wanting simply to hang on to what they have.

At least three changes underlie the lack of radical, passionate mass opposition in Canada today. First, the locus of power has become diffused. In Canada’s early days, governments (and political parties) mattered and they governed as if they actually could. The “Fathers of Confederation” had made designs for a strong central government, which intervening years, judicial decisions and circumstances have largely undone. Things are more complicated now, and it’s under a subordinate level of government, the municipal, where most of us now live. With the rise of corporations, the advent of global capitalism and a decline in the importance of partisan politics, it’s small wonder citizens don’t know which direction to march in. Social movements, an imperfect substitute for the political party, have further fragmented the political landscape. Confused people without a focus stay home on the couch.

Second is the loss of opportunity as a result of the increase in power, presence, and weaponry of the police apparatus, broadly defined. The “professionalising” of the police function has embedded it as a competing, unelected power within democracy. New technology has extended its reach in fearful, unwarranted ways. Seeing police on rooftops with high-powered weapons and recording devices adds a chilling effect to the act of protest. Witness the massive, frightening security provisions for the 2010 Corporate Olympics. No wonder people stay home.

Third is the gradual, insidious buffering of the citizenry from the extremes of social and political thought. We’ve all been herded towards the middle ground, manoeuvred there by an onslaught of advertising and corporate-media messaging. Not only individuals, but all major political parties (including the Greens) stand crowded together in the centre – and are beholden to interest groups. In contrast, the riskier act of protest is communal, based on implicit trust in those you are joining for the first time in united action, a longing for ends over means, a reverence for values, and, finally, a shading of the self-centred individualism we have been led to believe is the only proper way to live under a regime of advanced capitalism.

Not unexpectedly, the act of protest has come to be seen as an immature and inappropriate pose leading to possible loss rather than gain in one’s life – another reason most people don’t join in. Social exclusion and nasty encounters with the police or military are not high on anyone’s list. In philosopher Susan Neiman’s words, “It’s easier to be passive than active, which is why we’re all too happy to let other people run the world that circumscribes our lives Growing up means taking our lives out of others’ hands and into our own.”

In the simpler world of early Canada, protest was a straightforward strategy to get rid of an unwanted, primary government. Now, a change in governing parties has become an essentially meaningless event in our increasingly unresponsive democracy.

At once marooned and cocooned in the centre, we don’t take seriously the warnings about food security, peak oil and runaway climate change, imagining them always to lie over someone else’s horizon. Whose side will history be on?

Submitted by Brian Mason, who lives in James Bay.



Testimonial T-Shirts

Hippocrates wrote it; every medical student today swears it; no one in Victoria’s civic or provincial government seems to have heard of it. “First, do no harm.”

If you want to remind people around you of this fundamental rule of health care, then consider buying and wearing one of Harm Reduction Victoria’s T-Shirts.

These were designed and printed by HRV as a reminder to our health care agencies of a responsibility that many of them have failed to honour.



In May 2008, VIHA closed its only fixed-site needle exchange in Victoria in spite of their own funded research advice and a specific government mandate to deliver just such a service. To date they have not done what they know they should do and they have ignored their own advisors and international advocacy groups by refusing to open any needle exchange or safe consumption sites in Victoria. Vancouver may have them, other cities in BC and around the globe may have them - and the benefits of lower mortalities, cheaper policing and health costs - but Victoria will not. The harm being done is evident on our streets. HRV asks you to buy and wear this T-shirt message to our politicians.

These Tees were made in Canada and are good quality. Cost is \$20 (\$15 for student or fixed income) and you can order one by going to HRV’s web site www.harmreductionvictoria.ca, emailing victoria.harmreduction@gmail.com or by phoning Kim at 250-893-0853.



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The Accident

by Michael Wallace
 (a.k.a. Mykla, and Farmer Mike)

March 5 2002, a school field trip, student drivers, the race to school, 170 km/hr flip, wheels up for the sideways slide, my back seat son receives full impact, severing the lamp post. 6 hours upside down, lungs inhaling blood and vomit. 5 days of pending death, 12 hours of reconstructive surgery.

Easter weekend, hospital release, no medical support, no supplies, phoning was useless, I mix a chemistry set antiseptic. My fingered claws then swath cloths of hygiene across sutured gorges of a tragic youth. Exhausted the knotted stomach of my core drapes rusted arms towards the abyss. Shattered right humerus, stainless steel pins; L4-6 vertebrae, titanium rods; stomach, back, and arm, 89 staples.

My soul weeps deepening froth of saline, oozing glistening channels of despair to the precipice of my existence, cascading to the searing grates of hell on which I slump. I mask the exodus with the smell of my shirt. My son, a mind of 17 with hope and future, shattered as a melon oozing life’s essence from seeds of thought. Enclosed head injury, chipped teeth and C6 vertebrae, ruptured eye cavity, cracked pelvis and ribs.

Voided I cry, as my soul melts in jaundiced streams of shattered dreams, the foul smell of dying smoke permeating the expanding void of my being. Love, care, sacrifice, crumbling into an inevitable reality not yet understood. Desire strong, love full, capacity empty for provision of my children. This boy, a child man, slips from my ability, evoking clouds of guilt that shadow my existence. With unconscious reluctance, the dying soul within utters echoing memories, “never, never, give up” as a synonym rhyme of Aesop, endlessly shredding remnants of hope to the living corpse of a son before me.

Brothers, sister, father, mother my same blood family, gloats on the failure and collapse of my life. With taunting sneering competitive glee, mirroring a sea of reject and neglect. My son’s friend Roger, gathers him home, his family of guardian angels miraculously transforms his existence to sun clouds of love, graced where my incapacity fulfills. Sanctuary, food, clothing, support, inclusion with Love, where my family laughs.

Alone voiding to the gates of hell, I exist amongst the skank essence of my rotting life. Indulgence with homelessness, brewed with destitution and victimization, garnered with subjugated exploitation by societies industrial tyranny of ICBC lemmings, who “never, never, give up” the pervasive history of inequality.

Seven years lived in a Churchill metaphor, has guided realization to awareness, that words can “never, never, give up” the full meaning of gratitude, to the loving family of Roger, who rebirthed my sons life, when I could not.

Thank you to Jennifer Kingsley, Instructor of CREATIVE NON-FICTION, University 201 @ UVic. The support with machete, and scalpel advice, was greatly appreciated.

Michael has lived as a self employed contractor, farmer, single parent, and homeless person. He is now securely housed.

these pages are devoted to the life of Harriet Nahanee

Olympic Protests

It seems the [corporate] media is anxious to undermine the credibility of Olympic protesters. Instead of focusing on any of the negatives that the Olympics bring, they are being good corporate citizens and going after the protesters for throwing marbles in front of the torch run. The protesters however didn't know who the person was who did the deed which brings immediately to mind the question "Who was he?". Most likely either an infiltrator trying to discredit the protesters or some jerk who is only interested in making noise at anyone's expense.

I find it interesting when I saw the torch run going past that there were two corporate sponsor floats in front. One was Coke and the other was RBC Canada. Other than the official 2010 wagon the only other presence in the parade was fifteen minutes of police going past.

At the Legislature the local Olympic performers were drowned out for three hours by the overzealous RCMP helicopters buzzing the protesters walk. So all in all it turned out to be an expensive waste of your money. But I guess that is what this 'made for media Olympics' is all about.....

Susan Lee - Victoria

Responding to Corporate Media ...

Re "Torch Carrier Burning Mad," The Province, Nov 1, 2009

It's unavoidable you would quote the premier saying anti-Olympic marchers engaged in "vandalism, property damage, and frightening little children." But I marched the whole distance and saw none of that, only civil disobedience.

I think, in the absence of evidence, the premier's quote needed follow-up. Ask for evidence, or find out if there were reports of "vandalism, property damage, and frightening little children."

True, politics is rife with exaggeration and your readers must generally decide for themselves. But there's growing hysteria about the Olympics, much of it created by self-interested politicians. When they stoop to hateful vilification of opposition groups, reporters should follow-up.

Otherwise, it can lead to real trouble.

Rider Cooley,
Citywide Housing Coalition
Vancouver

hey everyone

just sending an email out to thank/congratulate everyone who made friday such a kick-ass, inspiring, lively, resilient and tenacious day.

to those who helped organize - look what we did! it was awesome! for some reason, people stuck through 3 hours of festival and four hours of marching in the rain. i think its fair to say that although we made mistakes that we still have to process, we learned so much together. and what we learned will strengthen our resistances, be they in the form of snake-marches in search of burning flames or the way we talk to each other over breakfast. i'm looking forward to debriefing and learning the most we can from this experience.

to those who helped us organizers learn - thank you for your patience and your open-ness to calling us on our crap, but coming together anyways. the energy you all spent on waking us up will not be lost!

to those who jumped aboard - thank you for adding your energy, marching-band-muzak, strategic minds, peddling skills, creativity and logistical prowess. you made sure that we navigated the fine line between chaos and brilliance! some of you took on less....um...inspiring tasks that really were the icing on the cake.

to those who were with us the whole time, just not always in meetings - from mask-making, to salmon-constructing, to photocopying and writing blog entries, so many of you were part of making sure the ship didn't sink. you did miss lots of bowls of salsa and foxy-the-dog antics, though.

to those who came out and stuck it out - thanks for making it work!

....la lucha sigue!

- tamara



Letters

Dear Janine

Special thanks to Alison Acker for *Pushing Uphill*, Rose Henry for *This Is how It Feels to Be Me*, Brian Mason for *Beyond The Core*, L. Jane Lotsberg for *Maybe I'm Not "Fine"*, and Kurt Lenfesty for *Making Shifts Within Ourselves*.

This entire edition is an inspiration for me.

Joyanna

Bravo! for the fine editorials & articles in the last several Street Newz! The paper just keeps getting better all the time.

Andrée

Keep up the incredible work, Janine!

Marge

Who Buys This "Eat The Rich" Rag?!!!!?

What still remains to be figured out by you folks is who actually buys your paper.

I've spoken with a few of your street vendors and invariably they describe the people they sell *Street Newz* to as older folks, usually well dressed retirees. People who, in other words, probably worked all their lives, maybe even for the government.

No people with blue hair, tats or nose rings. No street people, of course. Mostly just seniors who like to see your vendors at least trying to make an honest living, (as opposed to sitting on the sidewalk with a ballcap in front of them expecting strangers to feed their dog).

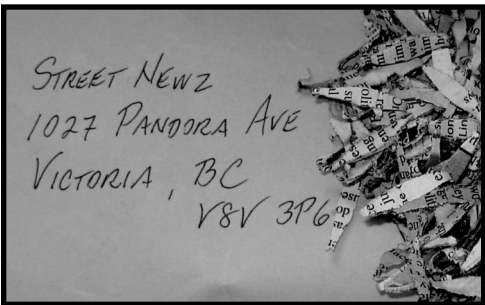
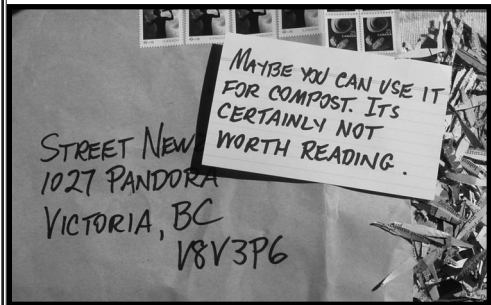
So why your rag is so consistently "eat the rich" in attitude remains a mystery to me. Absolutely no focus on the group mostly likely to actually look inside the pages. Nothing.

Well, if it gives you all a warm and fuzzy to rant as you do, have fun and carry on. But don't expect to be taken seriously. Ain't gonna happen.

But I thought I'd help with the recycling side of things. The enclosed copy is now good for something. Maybe in a potted plant.

All the best,
Jeff Apolinario

Editor's note: This appears to be the second time we've received a shredded *Street Newz* from you, Jeff. The first time you didn't offer your name, or much of an explanation about why you're so upset. A survey we conducted in 2007 showed our supporters are actually a very diverse group, from across the socio-economic spectrum. I'll invite them to respond to your note, and we'll publish those in the January *Newz*. Of course you're under no obligation to buy or read the *Street Newz*.



Other Olympic Stories

With Olympics Came New Laws to Sweep up Homeless
By Katie Hyslop, 14 Oct 2009, TheTyee.ca
Four recent host cities criminalized and removed street dwellers leading up to Games.

Mercer Led Raid on 'War in Woods' Tree-Sitters
By Geoff Dembicki and Bob Mackin, 23 Oct 2009, TheTyee.ca
2010 Games security chief is a veteran of clashes with anti-logging protesters.

This is the torch that Hitler lit
by John Allemang - Globe and Mail, Oct 24 09
www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/this-is-the-torch-that-hitler-lit/article1336988/
The Olympic flame was ignited for Vancouver 2010 at a classically styled ceremony this week. But there was no torch in ancient Athens - that myth was created in Berlin, 1936, as Nazi propaganda. John Allemang examines the dark facts behind the glowing ideals.

Too Much Ado About Olympic Interruptions
by Bill Tieleman.
Media focus on torch-bearers and ignore protesters' reasons.
www.straightgoods.ca/2009/View-Feature.cfm?Ref=545

Olympic protestors are 'terrorists': Bloy
by Wanda Chow - Burnaby NewsLeader, November 02, 2009
www.bcclocalnews.com/greater_vancouver/burnabynewsleader/news/68785952.html
People who protest the Winter Olympics are nothing more than "terrorists" with "limited intellect," Burnaby-Lougheed Liberal MLA Harry Bloy said in the Legislature Monday.

Day of the Torch
Thousands of people lined the streets of Victoria today for the beginning of the 2010 Olympic Torch Relay. Hundreds of media outlets from around the world are in town to cover this event. B Channel [bchannelnews.tv] has teamed up with Victoria Indymedia [victoria.indymedia.org], the Vancouver Media Co-op [vancouver.mediacoop.ca] and Submedia.tv to bring you coverage of the days events.

Let's play cops and zombies: protest takes over torch relay
by Bronwyn Lawrie and Kat Eschner, The Martlet, Nov 04, 2009
www.martlet.ca/article/20383-let-s-play-cops-and-zombies
The undead aren't usually political. They made an exception during the Olympic Torch Relay on Oct. 30.



these pages are devoted to the life of Harriet Nahanee

Why Do We Bother?

I'm very happy that we achieved our aim and that no violence broke out. I was particularly impressed by the police who monitored the rally and accompanied us on the march. They were calm, they were never hostile, and some were very friendly.

For comic relief, the day after the Olympics protest I marched in the Hallowe'en Zombies Parade, which also ended at the Legislature. One zombie was lurching along nibbling on a small pile of brains, moaning "Brains...hungry...need more brains," and one wag called out, "You won't find any brains at the Legislature!"

I wish I could find some humour in what's happening as a result of the October 30th protest. What I feel is overwhelming sadness that the Olympic games, which are advertised as bringing the country together, have only served to separate it, because many Olympics supporters refuse to comprehend our motives for protesting. I'm particularly frustrated by those who have tried to make protesters look uncaring, by lamenting the fact that their children were unable to participate in, or observe, the torch relay which we intercepted.



To those people I say the following: I can understand your disappointment. But I wish you could see the other side of the coin--that there are many children in Canada who have far more pressing problems than being deprived of a sports-related event.

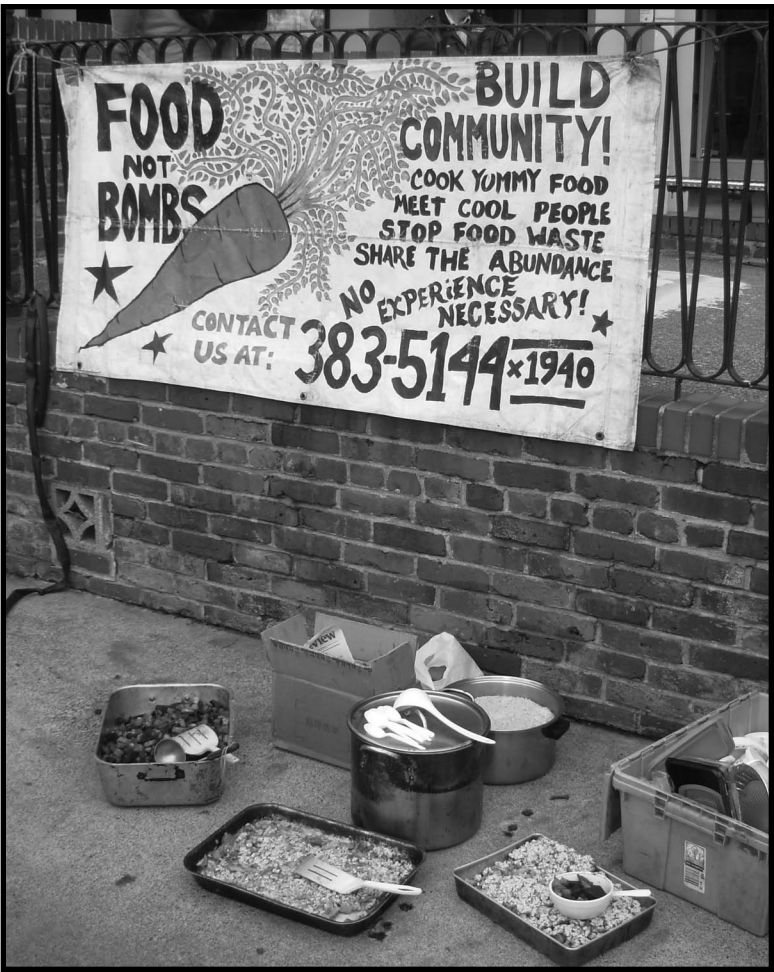
I don't wish harm on anyone, but it's not impossible that one day, your children could end up in dire circumstances too. You might lose your job because you were "downsized," your family might end up homeless and starving, or one of your children might acquire a disease or ailment which requires expensive attention. And thanks to budget cuts to vitally needed programs, so that billions of dollars could be squandered on a party of a few weeks' duration, there might be no assistance available to you.

Jane

A Good, Peaceful Protest

The anti-olympic protest was a few nights ago as the torch started its run here in our lovely city.

We met up at the main plaza in the city for hours of talks and cultural events. I was there with Food Not Bombs and our food only lasted about thirty minutes with all of the people there to take part which was nice.



After all the talks were over we started our march which lasted for well over five hours!! We took over many of the busiest streets and it was a good old fashion "Reclaim The Streets" event in which we messed up the traffic for a good many hours. There is something special about 300+ having a party in the middle of the busiest intersection of the city! Dancing, drums, music, arts, fire spinners (myself included), and 300 people taking back the streets.

We continued this for about three hours and then marched to intercept the running of the olympic torch which was successful as we congested the main street and the torch had to be re-routed many times.

Of course we were surrounded by police and riot cops for almost all of the night and a bit later in the evening police on horses even decided to surround us but we kept going. We ended up marching on the government buildings where the festivities were going on and causing some commotion but after about a half hour I was just dead tired and sore so I went back to the house.

A good protest indeed (as far as peaceful protests go) and I enjoyed every minute of it!

Munkey (greenanarchy.blogspot.com)



Olympics message is wrong



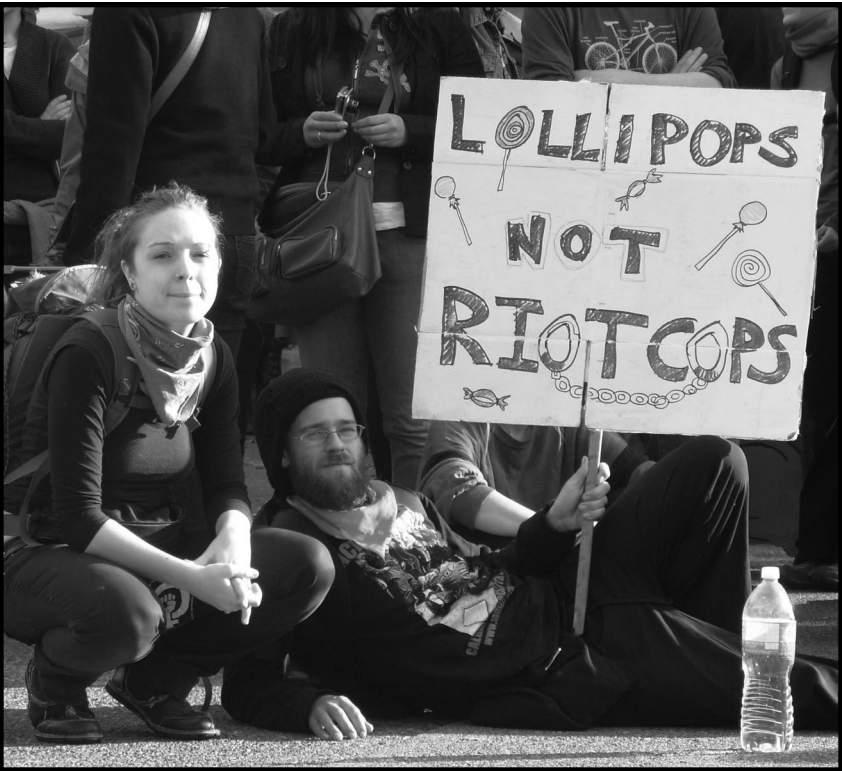
The wrong message is communicated through the Olympics. At the entrance to the Blue Bridge, one of the Olympians exclaimed in response to protesters: "We are doing this for the children."

Which children - the ones who are suffering from government cutbacks? What health message to children are Olympians communicating when they participate in the Olympics that is sponsored by Coca-Cola and McDonald's?

What environmental message are Olympians communicating to the children when Olympians are participating in an event which is sponsored by Petrocan-Suncor and the Royal Bank - producer and funder of the tar sands. (Even the Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has called on Canada, for the sake of climate change, to cease exploration in the tar sands).

What legal message to children are Olympians communicating when they participate in the an event sponsored by Dow which has continued to evade its legal responsibility to the victims of the Bhopal disaster, or by Cominco which has continued to avoid its legal responsibility for transboundary pollution?

Joan Russow



these pages are devoted to the life of Harriet Nahanee

On Monday November 2nd, BC MLA Harry Bloy from Burnaby Lougheed stated in the Legislative Assembly that anti-Olympic demonstrators are terrorists with limited intellect.

A rally against the torch relay in Victoria on October 30th was accused of using marbles to assault police horses. Demonstrators that noticed the marbles told the police about them before any damage was done. Police spokespeople claimed the marbles were thrown at the feet of the horses, but the marbles were actually found at the feet of the stationary march. Police seem to accept that damage really could have been done, such as falling officers and horses, or the “stampede” that Bloy suggests could have happened.

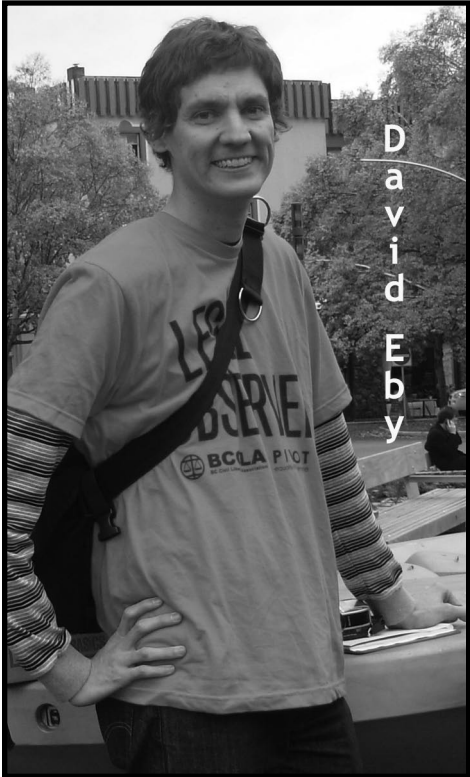
NDP MLAs consider calling protesters terrorists “a bit over the top.”

The torch relay was well behind schedule throughout the day and many people were unable to see it as it bypassed much of the route, a fact that VANOC blamed on the activists’ disruption, and this story became the whole of the media response to the march and rally. To many in Victoria on Oct 30th, the protest rally was an enriching and illuminating experience, and the mind numbing festivities of the torch relay and ceremonies were where intellect was really limited.

Crowds at the torch ceremony at BC’s Legislature building were treated to speeches from Stephen Harper, VANOC CEO John Furlong, executives from Olympic sponsors RBC and Coca-cola, and Vancouver and Victoria mayors. First Nations (including Songhees, Esquimalt, and both hereditary and elected chiefs of the four “Host Nations”) conducted a lengthy welcoming of the torch to indigenous territories. Ms Poole, wife of VANOC CEO Jack Poole, succeeded in lighting the ashtray-shaped cauldron after 5 minutes of trying with Furlong’s assistance. Spokespeople delivered much the same message: handling the flame is an emotional experience that people are inspired and touched by, creating Canadian unity and, according to Furlong, inducing “human behaviour.” There was square dancing, choirs, dancing mascots and military bands.

Two small dissenting groups were present at the morning ceremonies: one group tried “jeering” Stephen Harper and were quickly flanked and greatly outnumbered by RCMP, and a dozen colourfully dressed Raging Grannies stood near the war memorial with signs like “Olympic snow job” and “gold medal for spending.” Several isolated protests were reported along the relay route, including at least one mooning. An 87 year old lady stood alone in defiance to the relay and told the Globe and Mail that she was not intimidated by the officers surrounding her: she had resisted the WWII Nazis that had invented the torch relay, and she hadn’t allowed them to intimidate her then. A much larger group of Olympic dissenters began gathering at Victoria’s city hall at noon.

A huge torch was mounted on a wheeled table with the sign “END POVERTY.” Several women danced with hula hoops and a group of shirtless men played hacky-sack. A New Orleans-style marching band performed with clarinet, drums, trombone, two saxophones, and dozens of tambourines and make-shift instruments. A 30ft. anti-Olympic mascot salmon operated by four people like a Chinese dragon puppet was plagued by others operating sea-lice puppets. Other mascots included a bed bug and a rat. Several clowns were in attendance, one stilt walker, and a woman dressed as a police officer with pig ears. Two mock Olympic fans with RBC shopping bags yelled “We love the Olympics!” Official organizers of the event held a press conference at 1:45 and stated that the Olympic budget would be better spent on housing, healthcare, or education, making the claim that the 20 minute stop for the torch at UVic cost students \$27,000. The reporters only seemed interested in the fact that there was no permit for the rally.



David Eby

Police outnumbered the demonstrators. They had roof-top surveillance. Victoria Police Chief Jamie Graham was on the front lines of the entire 8 hour demonstration, saying police would use “extreme restraint.” Perhaps this was due in part to the presence of numerous BC Civil Liberties Legal Observers in orange shirts, led by David Eby. Eby, and Pivot Legal, contributed to Graham’s resignation as Vancouver’s Police Chief in 2007. Only one arrest was made: a 20 year old woman had been approached



on her way to the event by numerous plainclothes officers and charged her with assaulting an officer.

First Nations activists were not in costume and looked very serious, gathered around a Mohawk flag. Stop 2010’s Gord Hill reiterated the point that BC is unceded, or without land claim settlements, hence the popular chant “No Olympics on Stolen Native Land.” The memory of First Nations elder Harriet Nahanee was invoked. It was explained that Nahanee had died as a result of her three weeks in a Surrey holding cell she where she was sentenced to for opposing Olympic related developments. Hill called for groups across Canada to mobilize and stop the torch as it passed through their communities.

Several poverty rights groups were there, including Vancouver’s Anti-poverty committee, and Victoria’s Committee to End Homelessness. David Johnston, a homeless man recently released from a 23-day prison fast for erecting tents in the daytime, spoke along with fellow housing activist Chris Johnson about upcoming court cases concerning the city’s declaration that homeless have a constitutionally protected right to erect tents between 9pm and 7am. At least one homeless couple living out of a shopping cart attended the demonstration’s entire 8 hour duration.

Several people shared songs they had written against the Olympics, accompanied by the band, including the Raging Grannies, and Dave and Mary Lowther who sang a song about the “Bread and Circuses” method the Romans used to placate the masses.

After more



Remembering Harriet Nahanee

than an hour of short speeches and songs, participants competed in a mock Olympics including wrestling matches with “Gordo” and an “Olympic top cop” Bud Mercer look-alike. A Binners Olympics was held in which contestants had to collect and sort about \$4 in cans and bottles from around Centennial Square using Tony’s trailers, which are like shopping carts that attach to bicycles.

After the final sport events the Annual Zombie March, which this year was billed as part of the 3 day Victoria Comic Convention, arrived as an incredible variety of corpses, swelling the crowd to 200 at lowest estimate and 500 at highest. Almost as soon as the march began it became apparent that anyone behaving too zombie like (trying to eat people’s brains or having trouble opening doors) would be surrounded and followed by a dozen officers.

...continued on page 7



these pages are devoted to the life of Harriet Nahanee

ON BURNING NAZI IDOLS

continued from page 6

The march proceeded through Chinatown to Streetlink homeless shelter where Rose Henry gave a talk about the conditions on Victoria’s streets, the cold weather protocol, and new provincial legislation being introduced to allow police to force homeless into shelters. Police stopped traffic for one block in all directions and the procession zigzagged up and down the blocks between Wharf and Douglas Streets before arriving in Bastion Square [formerly the Gallows site] to drop an illegible banner over the new tulip-boat statue.

Upon returning to Douglas St., the march passed eight horseback officers down Broad Street, along with still more officers and vehicles. Protesters walked past the horses but a large native man with a picture of Harriet Nahanee stuck on his back walked towards the horses, waving his flag at them until the march was safely past. The march occupied the block at Hudson’s Bay and a man gave a talk about the Bay, colonialism and resistance. The march continued down Government Street, turned left to Douglas, and then turned back to occupy the intersection at RBC on Douglas for 40 minutes.

It was announced the march would continue north to Pandora, an area known for substance abuse victims. Instead, it turned south on an interception course with the torch in Cook St. Village. A handful of people that had turned out to view the torch relay voiced their displeasure to the crowd and to the media. One large bald man, a regular fixture at City Council meetings, stood on the patio of the café with both middle fingers extended at the passing throng. Many people came out from their homes to view the march and many joined it on Cook St. Critical Mass, a cyclist group known for taking over roads and slowing traffic by riding en masse, also joined the march at this point.

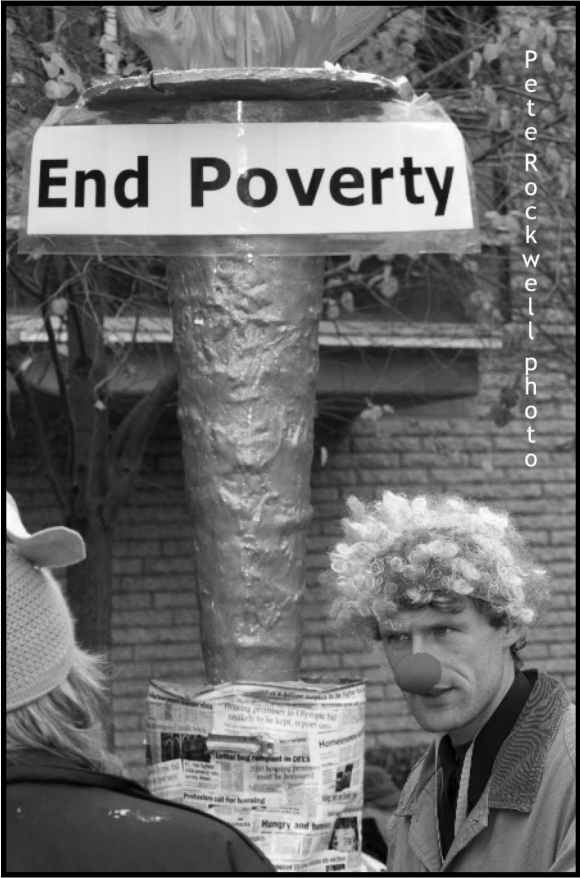
The march continued a meandering path for several blocks, then headed straight towards the Legislature. Gordon Campbell had been addressing the small crowd at the evening ceremonies after the torch arrived 20 minutes behind schedule. When the march turned past the Empress Hotel, it came upon a line of more than 50 police officers blocking Government Street with barricades. The protesters stopped. All the street lights were off. It poured rain. The entourage of dozens of officers still lingered with the march itself, and the regiments following the march blocked their retreat. Police formed walls of bodies encircling the march, pushing them in tight. The police helicopter that had been following the march came in low over the museum. The march stood paralyzed like this for only a few minutes, still pushing forward very slowly, when suddenly the police began advancing quickly from the barricades towards the march. When advancing police arrived at the marchers, Campbell finished his speech and officers acted as though they had never meant that the march was not welcome to advance to the legislature.

Upon arriving at the barricades that blocked off the Legislature, the police used fencing to force the march through a narrow entrance into the corral that had been used for the torch procession. The front half of the march proceeded to the stage and the rear struggled to get the torch table and salmon puppet through the tiny opening, finally dismantling the fencing and entering the muddy lawn.

The concert-like evening ceremonies were made up of several dozen youth under the age of 13 standing in costumes in the rain. Half had glowing red umbrellas that were meant to create a heart shape when viewed from above. The other half wore glowing white garbage bag costumes of birds with horns. When asked, none of the youth could indicate what kind of bird they were beyond “some kind of traditional first nations bird.” All of these young volunteers provided their own white shoes. Another group of young volunteers ran around waving glow sticks in the air for nearly fifteen minutes. During the performance, black clad RCMP flanked the stage and the kids. The concert was a blaring hip-hop act. The heavy beat was raised to a deafening volume. Demonstrators chanted “No Olympics on Stolen Native Land!” over the din. It was pitch dark on the lawn, punctuated by a pyrotechnics show belching up fire big enough to temporarily heat and illuminate the whole vicinity. During the periods of illumination, people stared amazed at the lawn filled almost entirely with police officers.

The march finally drowned out the concert and pulled back all the way to Bastion Square where they broke off into smaller groups, the biggest of which headed back to Centennial Square and rested at the covered area beneath council chambers.

Tavis has been floating back and forth across Canada for 5 years of solidarity with the homeless, as both a homeless person and a homeless activist.



Peter Rockwell photo

Tales of Two Protests

by C.L. Cook

Much has been published lately in Victoria’s press regarding the Olympics Torch Run fiasco. Some of it is even true; that is to say, some of the letters published on the Times-Colonist Op. Ed. page are heartfelt, if not based entirely on the facts as I witnessed them. But, my intention here is neither to criticize what passes for journalistic integrity within the Canwest Global stable of reporters and editors, nor review the motives of the 500 participants in the Zombie March that briefly shut down some of the city’s main thoroughfares, and forced the rerouting of one stop along the Torch route. Instead, I want to look at the police role in the event, as contrasted to another protest gathering.

At the recent G20 meetings, held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, hundreds of riot police and other law enforcement attacked a peaceful rally, brutalizing the men, women, and children that had the temerity to attend an entirely legal and legitimate rally, and arresting almost two hundred of them. Like those opposing the 2010 Vancouver Olympic games, and taking issue with its harbinger, the running of the torch through the towns and villages of the country, the reasons for coming out into the open to oppose the G20 are varied and many. Both ultimately object to the growing role corporations play in dictating government policies, and their increasing access to the public purse. But where the police in Pittsburgh, bejoined by officers from at least 40 police departments from around the country, (some reportedly taking vacation time to go to Pittsburgh to take in the show of force) decided to bust out the arsenal, and bust in a few heads, their Victoria counterparts, (aided by the RCMP and a contingency from Vancouver) took a different tack.

Over the last decade, police forces across the United States of America have added a wide array of new weapons, termed “non-lethal” in some cases, to their basic kit. As well as the ubiquitous plastic strap hand-cuffs and taser guns, the Pittsburgh operation revealed some of the newest peace keeping accessories. Mike Ferner, the president of Veterans for Peace, attended the rally and reports a few of the weapons he witnessed deployed against rally:

“No longer the stuff of disturbing futuristic fantasies, an arsenal of ‘crowd control munitions,’ including one that reportedly made its debut in the U.S., was deployed with a massive, overpowering police presence in Pittsburgh during last week’s G-20 protests. Nearly 200 arrests were made and civil liberties groups charged the many thousands of police (most transported on Port Authority buses displaying ‘PITTSBURGH WELCOMES THE WORLD’), from as far away as Arizona and Florida with overreacting-and they had plenty of weaponry with which to do it. Bean bags fired from shotguns, CS (tear) gas, OC (Oleoresin Capsicum) spray, flash-bang grenades, batons and, according to local news reports, for the first time on the streets of America, the Long Range Acoustic Device (LRAD).”

During my participation with the Zombie March in Victoria, (from the muster point in Centennial Square, all the way to the contentious confrontation with waiting fans of the Torch in Cook Street village, and the deployment of marbles into the street by person(s) unknown, presumably to hinder the horses) I saw about fifty police armed in standard fashion, about a dozen police vehicles, eight mounted police, and one helicopter. A bicycle unit and other cars and motorcycles accompanied the torch, and there was apparently a large contingent of RCMP at the Legislature.

The mood in the crowd was, for the most part, festively defiant, though there were a few masked types seemingly bent on provoking trouble. Perhaps it was one of these provocateurs that brought along his kid brother’s marble collection? Thankfully, the police had a game-plan, and it didn’t include the kind of violence used as first resort in Pittsburgh.

But, we’re not out of the woods up here in the Great White North. As police departments have militarized over the last decade and more, Canadian forces have followed. Arriving a few days ahead of the widely publicized Zombie March was the RCMP’s armoured command post. This behemoth is not to my knowledge equipped with the LRAD weapon Mike Ferner describes, but I imagine it is full of all kinds of tools handy in population control situations. Which begs the question: “Just what are those situations?”

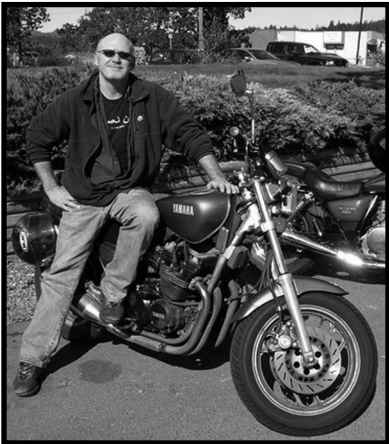
It makes me wonder: Does the frequency and character of civil protest merit the “armed camp” approach taken by police forces in the U.S. and aped in Canada? And how does the training police are receiving effect the way they deal with the public in crisis situations and on a daily basis? Canadians were horrified to witness the last moments of recent immigrant, Robert Dziekanski, surrounded by four RCMP officers in Vancouver International Airport, and tasered till dead. More troubling than the ignorant manner these four goons displayed in that instance, is the fact it all happened in less than a minute. In less than one minute, officers arrived and killed a man, without pausing to properly assess the scene.

Perhaps it was Robert Dziekanski’s unfortunate demise on his first day in Canada that prompted the subdued RCMP and VicPD handling of the Victoria march, or maybe some in policing watched the Pittsburgh police riots and thought better of following their lead, but at least one of the unmasked marchers in that crowd was glad of their decision.

But should I be glad? Shouldn’t we expect reasoned responses from our police, politicians, and judiciary?

The first question we youngsters were asked long ago in law class was: “Is Canada a police, or policed state?” How, I wonder, would we have answered that question then if the policeman in the room visiting our class was the battle-ready, body armoured, machine-gun toting version we see occasionally trooped out? Or, would the question merely be redundant?

Chris Cook is managing editor to PacificFreePress.com and hosts Gorilla Radio on CFUV radio Mondays at 5pm.



This is No Game!

by Rob Mason

I personally am not an enthusiast of the sports metaphor.

On the surface it occurs to me that they lack imagination. Beyond that I have concern for the fact that sports, which at best, is merely an entertainment form, is embraced to such a degree, that it is allowed to inform and alter how we see the world, our relationships and our communication.

It seems to me that most anything can be justified in the name of sports. I first observed evidence of this in school when I would have given anything for some form of merciful respite from another mind-numbing lecture. Most of us were there (at least in body) until the bitter end, with the notable exception of members of one of the school teams. They had a game so voila, amnesty is granted.

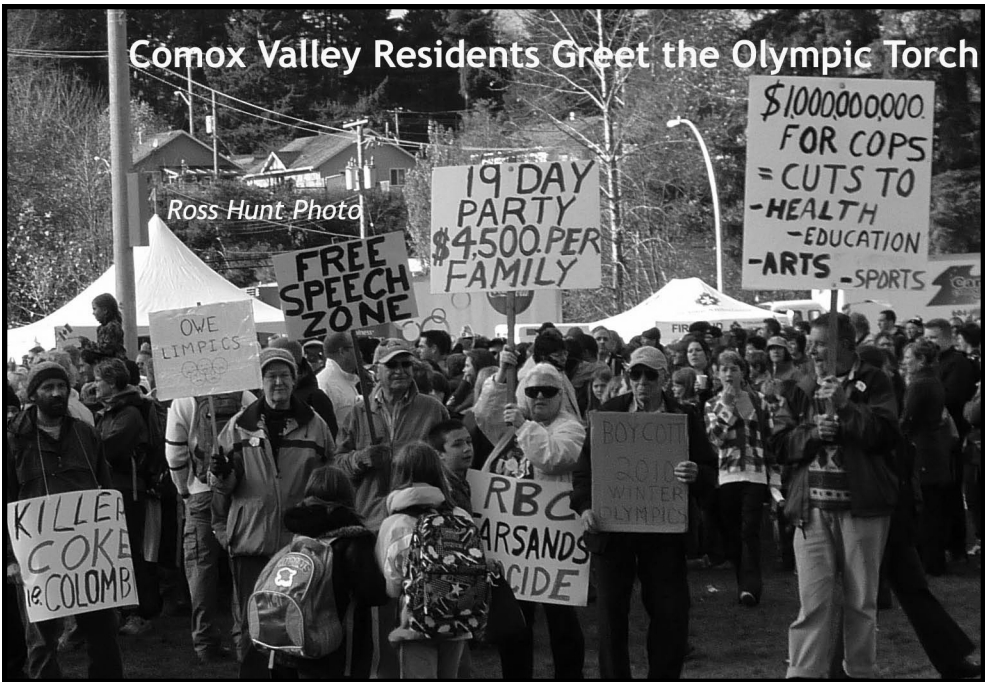
Of course stories abound about rabid sports parents – driving their kids to excel in some cases at activities they don’t even care to participate in. In the stands all civility and decorum are completely lost. I would even go as far as to say humanity itself is sadly lacking. Of course this isn’t confined to the area of youth sports.

I am reminded of an occasion when I joined some friends to watch their son play football – I went more in support of them – they were so proud of their son I thought, I really don’t know much about the game but I’ll keep an open mind. Throughout the game there were examples of the sort of behaviour outlined previously, both on and off the field. But the real eye-opener for me was after a stoppage of play involving someone who had been tackled – hit so hard that the sickening sound of the impact reverberated through me and literally turned my stomach. A dozen or more players, averaging two hundred pounds each, all threw themselves on top of the two involved in this collision. It soon became evident that someone in that pile wasn’t doing very well – it took considerable time to get to the player in distress and what I heard through the crowd shocked me. Instead of perhaps “oh my God I hope whoever that is will be alright” it was “oh thank God it wasn’t one of our players”- suddenly caring and compassion were conditional, granted only to those on “our team” that were “one of us.”

Needless to say all forms of violence are encouraged and widely appreciated by the “fans.” This simply represents another form of divisiveness - a form of dehumanization whereby behaviour that would have one arrested in any other walk of life is applauded at the sports venue. “Win at all costs,” whatever it takes to “bring home the gold.”

Damn, a sports metaphor. How did that creep into my consciousness? I don’t even have cable! Well so as not to seem too self-righteous I will qualify its use, as it serves to leads into that which is to be the focus of the remainder of this commentary, namely the Winter Olympics.

It is only a matter of months now before we hear exclaimed “Let the games begin.” Of course the games commenced long ago in the form of cost overruns, budgets that are better hidden than the steroids used to attain the coveted podium (not to mention the corporate endorsements), people displaced from their long term residences etc. This time the psychological slight of hand that justifies cruel and inhuman punishment delivered to anyone that happens to be wearing a different coloured jersey is also being heaped upon those that are the most vulnerable in our



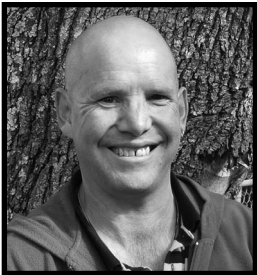
society - the homeless. As if they haven’t been marginalized enough, often vilified for not being “on our team” - “one of us.”

Now in the name of a two week sports event brought to town to entertain (read anesthetize) the masses, as we are encouraged to stand proud as we host the world, get behind our countries’ athletes and other assorted nationalist, corporate sponsored malarkey. Proud of what – that so many cash starved social services and programs were squeezed further (or cut altogether) that those on the street are being shipped out, that those in low cost housing are being made homeless, that while the people of B.C. rush out to catch the fever (or whatever the jingle du jour is) and subsidize the whole fiasco further by buying designer license plates – being duped into believing that the legacy will live on long after the torch is extinguished. Well that is partially true - certainly the debt will be a presence for years to come.

It is sad that the dedication, talent, and superhuman efforts of many of these athletes are tarnished, even outright exploited, to further the corporate agenda and those that stand to benefit from them. Can anyone really stand proud – prepared to receive a medal in an event that is being hosted at such a cost, which will bring about such upheaval and long-term pain? This is the same variety of divisiveness and dehumanization that brings about and justifies wars, illegal and otherwise pitted against “those” that believe differently than “us,” another of the “games” of the industrial/military complex.

Perhaps if some creativity, commitment and proactivity had been applied to the homelessness crisis, we would have something to be proud of – instead as the athletes bow their head to receive their medal we can only wonder if there could be a modicum of shame upon their mind that these games have been made possible for “them” by so many of “us.”

Rob Mason had what seemed like a lifetime career in nursing and a personal journey with addiction, and has witnessed and experienced first hand the need for (and the shortcomings of) some services that are relevant to those living in poverty and on the streets.



The Tortoise And The Hummingbird cyann ray

I believe it was some Dutch physicians who first hypothesized that we are all born with an allotted number of heartbeats. If we race through life we will not last as long as those taking their time. The impressive longevity of the tortoise and the short-lived frantic life of the hummingbird are the most obvious examples in nature.

As a person who hasn’t been able to run since developing breasts and bunions 35 years ago, I was somewhat pleased to hear this. While I am all for being fit and active, I have never been a fan of organized sports and I have a pet peeve against joggers. With the hoopla of the Olympics breathing down our necks, I felt it was a good time to share a different perspective on sports.

Like many of my generation and before, I grew up playing outside, even in winter. Tobogganing, skating, snowmen and fort building, hopscotch, skipping, hide-and-go-seek, redlight/greenlight, Simon says, red rover, kick the can and numerous games involving balls or pucks kept us kids active. For almost 15 years I played, jumped, skipped, swam, hiked and rode my bike everywhere. No need for matching outfits, coaches, gymnasiums or loads of money.

Once I entered highschool, gym classes completely changed my attitude about sports. I was forced to compete and that took the fun out of everything. Joy was replaced with anxiety over discovering I couldn’t run as fast or throw as far as my classmates. This made me one of the last chosen when teams were formed. Just great for the adolescent ego. Ultimately, this lead me to skip off gym and solidified my anti-sports attitude.

I finished off my teen years never knowing any

jocks or joggers. My friends and I remained active though. None of us had cars, or parents who’d chauffeur us around. We rode our bikes or walked most places. For years we’d gather

at an ungroomed diamond for afternoons of pick-up baseball. No outs. Everyone played. It was fun.

The real world plays games much differently. I’d like to think that there are no winners or losers when I see youngsters, for example, playing soccer. But as children get older, those involved in sports of any kind are certainly learning about competition. And in our capitalist society, competition is seen as a good thing. This is troublesome.

The Olympics are about competing; about rewarding winners. And it’s not limited to the athletes. Cities compete to host this brief extravaganza and they spend oodles from the public purse to do so.

In the professional world of sports we reward athletes, not with medals, but with gargantuan salaries and iconic status. Those hefty incomes are set before our youth like mighty, golden carrots. Can you imagine how society would improve if we treated teachers and healthcare workers with the same degree of limitless support, respect and financial reward as we do athletes? How can it be okay to pay some guy who can kick or throw a ball a kazillion dollars to play a game and barely provide job security and a living wage for those teaching our children or taking care of our sick?. This is preposterous. And the Olympics are bringing this absurdity home.

Lots of folks are against the Olympics for socio-political reasons. The needs of many are further neglected to accommodate the desires of a few. The poor, the sick, young, old or homeless, all are being ripped off of resources that are instead going to a few gifted athletes and the rich folks who can watch them. Billions are spent on the Olympics. That our government has the money to host this unnecessary,

elitist event while making drastic cuts in services the rest of us depend upon, should be enough to offend even the most neutral fence-sitting Canadian.

But I’m not here to dis the Olympics- plenty of others are doing a fine job of that already. Mine is a complaint about the world of sports in general. Let’s start with runners. Running is a basic activity that can be done anywhere, including on-the-spot in one’s own livingroom. Why then, do runners insist on running where there are cars, bikes, strollers, dogs, children and elderly folks with walkers? As a cyclist, runners can pose quite a threat to my safety. Most are “in the zone,” completely tuned out to their surroundings and rarely yielding to traffic of any kind.

And how about the damage to public green spaces caused by sports? Clearcutting acres of trees and using tons of chemicals so that golfers can play a game is morally questionable. I used Topaz park for nearly eight years to walk my dog. When they turned a huge, grassy field into artificial turf for soccer players, I was very sad and disappointed. To make matters worse, the amount of trash, empty bottles, used gauze and tape, soggy sweat clothes and stinky socks that are regularly left behind (despite numerous garbage cans in the area) just confirmed my complete disregard for the world of sports. Dog owners must pick up their dog’s poop, but apparently, if you play soccer, you can leave your snack wrappers, coffee cups and dirty clothes behind. There are no “sports police” harassing athletes And if you’re really good at throwing, hitting or kicking a ball, you can beat the crap out of a cab driver if he fails to recognize your greatness. Oh, that’s sportsman-like!

It’s all about a social hierarchy. And for some stupid reason we’ve placed those who can move faster higher up on the scale. I can see how in pre-historic times speed may have been an asset, but I say it’s time to slow down and reassess our priorities as a species. It’s just called the human race...it’s not actually a race!

Homelessness Has Its Privileges

by I.P. Newhere

Is being homeless *really* such a bad thing? I guess it depends on how you look at it.

When my fiancée and I first got together 4 years ago, we were homeless for about 4 months, and until about 2 months ago, when we became homeless *again*, I had forgotten what a good life experience it had been.

Allow me to paint a picture and give you a little bit of background. I used to be the bad guy; a crystal meth dealer/addict with a bad attitude and nothing to lose. This is how I met my fiancée, as she was one of my customers at the time. Within the first couple of weeks that we were together, we helped each other sober up and straighten out each other’s lives, while living in a cardboard refrigerator box in a bush less than 10 feet away from a busy street. Now after 4 years, 2 kids, and a nasty run-in with the Ministry for Children and Family Development (which I am not going to discuss in this story), we have become homeless yet again.

You see, we’re like a lot of families her in Victoria; my fiancée gets a welfare cheque for herself and our 2 children, while I usually work an under the table cash construction job. However, the global economic crisis has hurt us all, and I haven’t worked a steady job since February. And since our kids are in foster care, my fiancé’s welfare has been cut down dramatically. Because of a lack of affordable rental housing, we found ourselves out in the streets.

Now I don’t want to seem like I’m conceited, but we are both people of high intellect and good street smarts. First off, I think that the smartest thing we did was avoid the nasty 7am kick to the ribs wake up call from the VicPD and opted to live in Saanich. We got ourselves a tent from the Salvation Army, pitched it in the woods behind Tillicum Mall, and began to gather things to make a comfortable home for ourselves. (By the way, we don’t steal; we both think it’s wrong.) We managed to gather a futon mattress, table, chairs and tarps just to name a few items. We kept the area clean not just to keep away the rats and the raccoons, but so the “straights” wouldn’t call the police and report us for camping illegally. However, a month later, the police did show up and evict us. A special thank you to Constable Michael Gee of the Saanich Police Bike Squad for being so courteous and professional. He *truly* is one of the good guys among so many wolves in sheep’s clothing.

Home is now a mattress in an underground parkade and a very warm blanket. As long as we’re gone by 8 am (the time the “straights” arrive to start opening up their businesses), nobody bothers us, not even the police who occasionally drive through. We spend our days pushing around a shopping cart collecting any and all refundable containers, including glass. We make about \$30 a day doing this, which is enough to feed us both and get us each something sweet (we both have a sweet tooth). We also try to collect brass and copper for extra money, which can pay *very* well, especially for those colder nights when a bottle of Fireball helps to warm up your insides. It was recently our 4 year anniversary and I was wondering what we were going to do as we had no money at all. That was until I found a bunch of copper and brass in a garbage pile on a construction site, which netted us almost \$130! Needless to say, we had a fun filled anniversary that neither of us will ever forget.

Not everything has been good for us. When we lost our housing, we lost all of our belongings except for a few bags of clothes and a blanket. All of our possessions, most of our important papers, and irreplaceable pictures of our kids were gone forever. Since being on the street, our bags of clothes and other things gathered along the way have been stolen, TWICE! But we still keep going on, with a smile on our faces, holding our heads up high. This is one of the best times of our lives.

Sounds crazy huh? Our kids are in foster care, we have nowhere to live, no job, no money, no possessions, and basically just the clothes on our backs. But we do have one thing that I have yet to mention in this story. We have nowhere to go but up. We have been working with MCFD and our children are being returned shortly. My fiancée’s welfare money is being reinstated. We will be moving into low income housing as of December 1st and I will be starting a union job position around the same time.

So, is being homeless *REALLY* such a bad thing? I don’t think so, but I guess it depends on how you look at it.

This is a true story and my hope in writing it is to inspire anyone that is homeless or on the verge of being homeless to hold your head up high and to realize that life is what you make of it, good times or bad. Many thanks to the Mustard Seed Food Bank, the Salvation Army, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, the Saint John the Divine Church Food Bank, and all of you who have helped us out along the way. Hopefully one day we will be able to repay all of you for your kindness and generosity. At last, my faith in humanity has been restored.

Who Can Help the Victoria Human Exchange Society?

The Victoria Human Exchange Society is a grass roots group providing support and advocacy to people working hard to solve their own problems. It is simply a partnership of human beings - all with gifts to be shared and exchanged with those in need - and by supporting one another, we grow towards a healthier community.



Our houses have always been rented from Owners who understand the need to house those who have no fixed address because of poverty, addiction, marriage break-up, unemployment, under-employment, mental illness and so on.

Many of these Owners have entered into the spirit of our Society by keeping the rents low and even raising money for us within their own circles. Having a social conscience they have agreed to enter in to the exchange of life’s gifts. They will never make a profit from this arrangement but can pay their mortgages.

We have many volunteers who within their churches and service agencies talk about what we were doing and they raise money to support us; we have accessed funds from several Foundations over the years.

The Provincial Employees assisted us from 1992 until just this year when our application was denied. Other regular funders express regret that they no longer had funds to disperse.

Why things have become so difficult in the last two years:

- * VHES took on some very expensive houses with rents between \$1850 and \$2200. This was our biggest mistake.
- * Some of these houses had high overhead: Oil heating; City Utilities; Pest control; Garbage removal; maintenance.
- * Some of our most dedicated volunteer Board members needed to resign for personal and family reasons. One of these was a meticulous treasurer whom we miss greatly.
- * A few volunteers are bearing the major burden of fund raising, doing intakes for new people; hands on care of the very fragile who need a lot of attention, trying to meet their own needs including their own family’s needs. In some cases, very active volunteers are also caring for grandchildren and children with disabilities in their own homes.
- * The Ministry is cutting back on payments of rent to certain individuals who according to new rules do not qualify. This diminishes our rental income.

What we plan to do:

- * We may need to terminate our leases with the Owners of the expensive Convent houses. If so we will work with agencies who are able to take over the Houses and so prevent anyone being left without housing.
- * We would hope to find a less expensive house to re-establish Esther’s House which is supported by funds from the Sisters of St Anne Esther’s Dream Foundation.
- * We are receiving attention from the Victoria Real Estate Foundation, the Victoria Foundation, and the United Way who say they will support us because they admire our volunteerism and our model of housing.
- * This would leave us with five instead of seven houses in Victoria. We have no plans to close our Sidney or Salt Spring Island houses.
- * We must find a new Treasurer and new volunteers with expertise that the Society needs. The Victoria Foundation is offering consulting services and Board members who can do fundraising for VHES while preserving our original identity as NOT an agency, but a “family of friends” sharing life’s gifts and supporting one another towards a healthier community.

How you can help:

- * Since we are told that our Hydro may soon be cut off at some houses because of bills we are unable to pay, we hope that all our supporters will assist us immediately with donations. Some supporters already have sent help and we thank them all.
- * If you have a house to lease to us and you can afford to offer lower than market rent, we can work with you and the Sisters of St Ann to set up another Esther’s House (Esther being the childhood name of their foundress, Venerable Marie Anne Blondin).
- * If you could assist in the role of Treasurer, it would relieve our already overburdened member who is trying to accomplish this task.
- * Can you to assist at the houses as a volunteer, driving persons to appointments; offering support to individual occupants, or helping with cleaning or maintenance tasks?
- * Can you supply storage for excess furniture or appliances that we receive as donations but cannot immediately use?
- * Can you donate food or supplies for use in the houses? Toiletries, paper products, and cleaning supplies are much appreciated. And bus tickets are often needed.

Thank you for all the help and donations in the spirit of the exchange of life’s gifts.

For more information contact
www.humanx.org; grandmas@saltspring.com, 250-920-5056

The Ruminations of a Cow!

by Southgate

It is early morning. I have been ruminating what I had eaten yesterday. A combination of a haystack, rice cake, green grass and the fodder provided by my master. Don't frown at me. I am destined to eat as quickly as possible and ruminate so leisurely hours together thereafter. Whether you like it or not, my digestive system has been designed and created in such a way that I have to necessarily ruminate lest my digestion will not be complete. What to do?

Now I ruminate about the ill treatment meted out to me and my three months old calf ever since we came here two months ago. My master purchased me and my one month old calf at Pollachi two months ago for a hefty sum from my previous master.

My life had not been a rosy picture with my previous master nor it has been with my present master. Before purchasing me, my present master examined me in so many ways; checked my teeth for my age; milked me on the spot in the cattle market to ascertain my utility; talked with my previous master through a third party what they called as a middleman. It was he who fixed a price on my head as well as for my calf. You believe it or not, having purchased us from my former master, we had to walk all the way for hours together from Pollachi to my present shelter.

Ever since I came here, my master's wife and her daughter are so happy and they even adore me just like God. In fact she has a soft corner for me and my calf, helping us to have a bath at least once in a week; treating and respecting us with reverence. But, my master has no such reverence for us. He is rather hell bent in extracting as much milk as possible from me and encashing it.

Despite gifting away all my milk leaving only very little to my three months old calf, still I am not given a befitting treatment to what we are due; not provided with a shelter that is free from harmful insects and mosquitoes. I and my calf could not sleep properly during night. While a bulk portion of my blood is converted and milked by my master, a small portion of my blood and that of my calf is sucked by these cruel mosquitoes. We feel terribly painful as these mosquitoes bite and suck our blood. Who cares for us and mitigate our sufferings?

Though I have a shelter, it is only thatched and open. Since we are thick skinned we somewhat manage ourselves from the cold or hot wind and unhealthy climate. We have to be in the midst of an unsanitary condition, like the stench of our own urine and cow dung and they are cleaned only once in the early morning by our master's wife. We are really grateful to her.

Ever since I gave birth to my calf, a question has been constantly haunting me. If human beings, I mean mothers, are very particular in mother feeding their children, say for a period of 6 months or one year, am I not entitled to the same privilege and right? You human beings crave for human rights, talk of human rights violation when somebody else violate your rights. Am I not entitled to the legitimate rights of an animal? I should be permitted to mother feed my cow, say, at least for a period of six months without any disturbance from you.

I wish to see my calf properly nourished and grow in a healthy way. Therefore, I wish that a moratorium should be imposed against the human beings at least for a period of six months from milking us immediately after giving birth to a calf and allow us to mother feed our calves without any disturbance whatsoever. In fact I am not asking for any favor from you, but I want only to safeguard my legitimate wish and right that I already have.

I hope that my wish will be fulfilled at least when my calf grows into a full-fledged cow. Until then I will continue to ruminate. Who can prevent me?

Southgate is a practicing lawyer interested in reading, blogging and article writing, concerned about human rights as well as the rights of animals.

Who is Malalai Joya?

Malalai Joya first made global headlines in 2003 as "the bravest woman in Afghanistan," when, still in her early 20s, she denounced the presence of warlords and fundamentalists at the loya jirga. Two years later, she became the youngest person elected to Afghanistan's lower house of parliament.

In parliament, Joya continued to speak out against the presence of human rights violators in government, including many former Mujahideen fighters and commanders. Human Rights Watch has estimated that up to 60% of deputies in the lower house of parliament are directly or indirectly connected to current and past human rights abuses.

Her fellow parliamentarians threw water bottles at her, shouted her down, with calls of "prostitute," and "rape her"- all of this occurring in parliament. She was suspended in 2007 after a TV interview in which she said parliament was worse than a zoo or stable, because at least "in a stable we have animals like a cow which is useful in that it provides milk, and a donkey that can carry a load."

None of the NATO countries took steps to reinstate her, despite their stated mission of bringing democracy and women's rights to Afghanistan.

This extraordinary young woman was raised in the refugee camps of Iran and Pakistan. Inspired in part by her father's activism, Malalai became a teacher in secret girls' schools, holding classes in basements. She returned to Taliban-ruled Afghanistan in the late 1990s, where she worked for underground organizations helping women and helped establish a free medical clinic and orphanage in her impoverished home province of Farah.

Malalai has travelled the world, speaking about the foreign occupation and the need to bring justice to Afghans warlords for their war crimes. She has received many human rights and peace awards and has been recognized for her courage.

"Afghan women like me, voting and running for office, have been held up as proof that the United States has brought democracy and women's rights to Afghanistan," Joya writes. "But it is all a lie."

The Book Tour

Malalai Joya returns to the United States and Canada, this time to share her new political memoir, [A Woman Among Warlords: The Extraordinary Story of an Afghan Who Dared to Raise Her Voice](#).

Joya's key argument is that the US/NATO, warlords and Taliban must be rejected and instead, progressives must be empowered. She therefore opposes the mainstream media's implicit claims that Afghans can only choose between the Taliban and the current government. She also rejects the tendency of some on the left to lend some support to the Taliban in their act of "resistance."

Join us for the Canadian launch of Malalai Joya's book, which Kirkus Reviews calls, "A chilling, vital memoir that reveals hidden truths about Afghanistan and directly addresses the misguided policies of the United States."

Sunday, November 15, 2 p.m., UVic, David Lam Auditorium, MacLaurin Bldg.

[A Woman Among Warlords](#) is an important and timely book. Malalai Joya's personal story is inspiring, and her political message is an uncompromising appeal for an end to NATO's occupation of Afghanistan and the impunity of the warlords in the Karzai regime. Co-written with Vancouver based StopWar activist and writer Derrick O'Keefe.

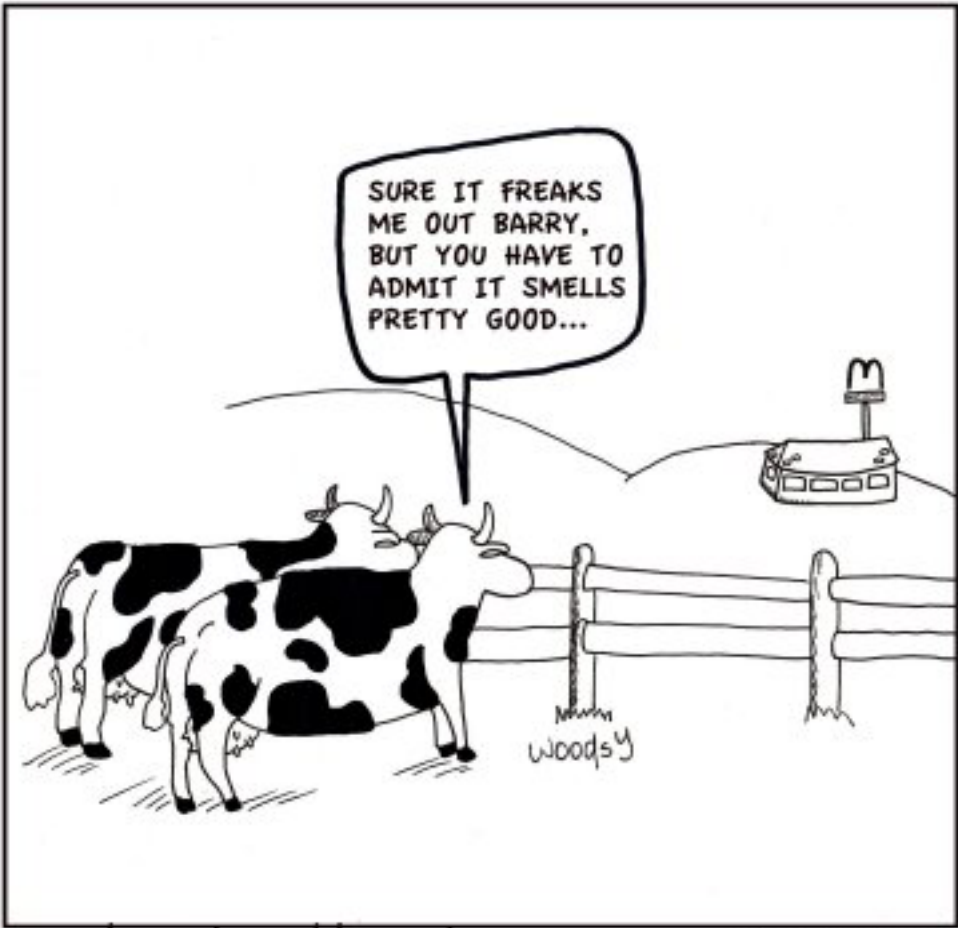
Admission by donation. All proceeds will go towards Malalai Joya's humanitarian projects in Afghanistan.

Sponsored by UVic Graduate Students' Society, UVSS-Armed with Understanding, UVic Social Justice Studies Program, Barnard-Boecker Centre Foundation, International Socialists, Victoria Peace Coalition, Women In Black, UVic Women's Centre, UVic Faculty of Humanities, Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid-Victoria, Council of Canadians-Victoria, KAIROS Victoria. Endorsed by Greater Victoria Teachers Association, UVic Students Against War.

"Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this inspiring memoir is that despite the horrors she relates, Malalai Joya leaves us with hope that the tormented people of Afghanistan can take their fate into their own hands if they are released from the grip of foreign powers, and that they can reconstruct a decent society from the wreckage left by decades of intervention and the merciless rule of the Taliban and the warlords who the invaders have imposed upon them." - Noam Chomsky



INSERT BRAIN HERE



woodsycartoons.blogspot.com

BY WOODSY



The Christmas Tree From Fernwood

Christmas ... the very name conjures up a multitude of cherished memories. One Christmas in particular, as I attended the Boys and Girls, comes to mind. As everyone wished each other their best regards, in the large main room, what remained was a single lone Christmas Tree. I inquired to the remaining people about it and they offered the skinny lone tree to me.

In our household we never knew when Dad would come and what kind of mood he was in either. There was always a lively argument between some very cantankerous siblings to add some melodrama to the occasion. My incredible Mother, in her quaint little manner, had a way of diffusing the most heated dispute and replacing it with love.

As my brother was getting ready to laugh at my tree, my mother reassured me even though it was sparse we could dress it up. And dress it up with style we did, placing some humble and beautiful ornaments with Love that this tree was as magnificent as the one in New York Times Square.

My mother's beautiful face lit up with her unconditional rejoicing. With love we placed our gifts underneath the tree and with exuberance as we were all happy. The Little Tree from Fernwood saved the Christmas Day.

Later on at the stately Victoria High School, as the bitter cold wind blew and the falling snow blanketed the trees and grounds resembling a Victorian post card, the old school was ablaze with lights as I curiously entered the building. I heard heavenly strains coming from the auditorium. Timeless carols sung by a beautiful choir delighted all and for the Grand Finale, "Silent Night," each choir member held a candle forming a Christmas Tree with the highest and brightest star representing the Blessed Christ Child the Saviour is born!

Mark Idczak

THANK YOU !!!!

From all the *Street Newz* vendors and writers, we sincerely THANK YOU for continuing to read, write, sell, allow us to sell outside your businesses, purchase, and otherwise offer support for our efforts at providing a reliable and dependable independent media. Thanks to you voices that would otherwise be silenced are able to be heard.

From *Street Newz* vendor, Earl:

I would like to thank you, my customers, for your support this year. It allowed me to get the extra food, plus the medications, that is not covered by medical. But the most precious thing you have given me was your smiles, each day, and sharing your personal thoughts and feelings. Looking forward to seeing you all next year!

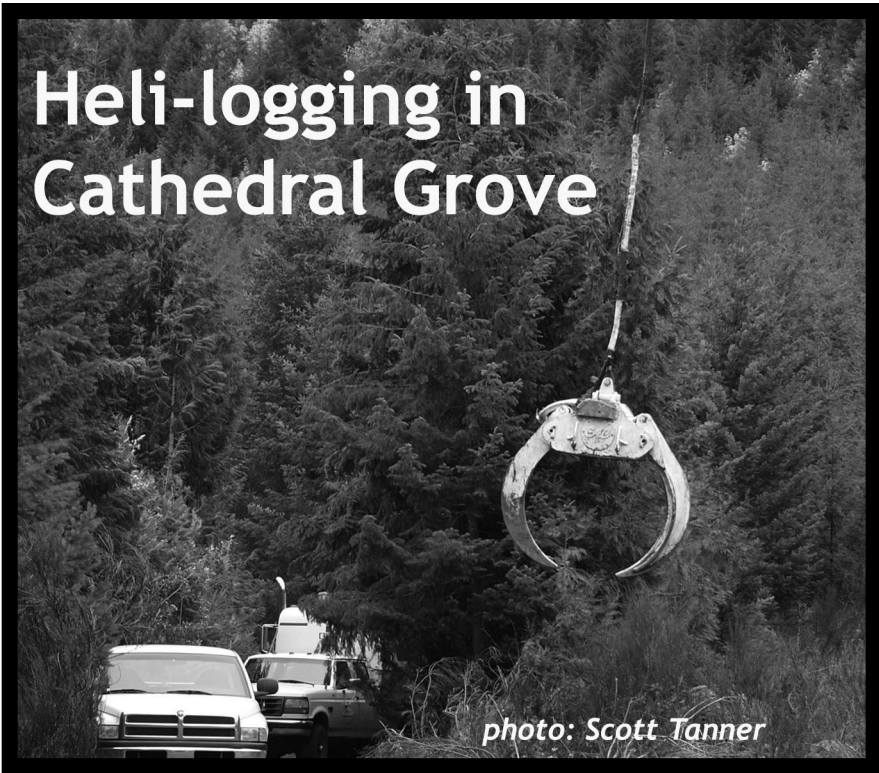
So again, thank you, and I wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

God Bless,
Earl

From *Street Newz* vendor, Shirley:

To all my customers I would like to thank you all for the past two years, all the friendships, all the great times. Thank you all with great love.

Your friend and
Street Newz vendor,
Shirley Davidson



The protective ancient forest canopy on the steep slope above Cathedral Grove is falling to Island Timberlands.

"Island Timberlands is logging the last of Cathedral Grove's world famous Ancient Forest," explains Annette Tanner, spokesperson for the Western Canada Wilderness Committee's Mid Island chapter. "This arrogant and aggressive act by such a bold new off-shore company dismisses the community concerns that for over 100 years have been supported by huge public and international outcry to see all of Cathedral Grove protected," continues Tanner.



a small correction
In the November Newz we reported, based on an anonymous tip, that there was a fire at the Ritz Hotel on September 13th. Our anonymous friend would like that corrected: the fire actually took place on September 20th.



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May money from the sale of this newspaper be used for peace, and pass through healing hands.

WHERE YOUR \$\$\$\$\$ GOES
Vendors pay 50 cents for each Street Newz (to pay the printer); whatever you give them is theirs to keep.
There's one salaried Coordinator who produces the Newz. No overhead, no extraneous expenses.

A Big Huge THANK YOU to all of you who support us in your many diverse ways ... and this month especially to Gordon for the Wellburn's gift certificates!

	August	Sept	Oct	Nov
Street Newz Revenue				
Paper Sales (from previous mth)	410.00	415.00	465.50	332.50
Donations	97.45	345.00	170.00	300.00
Gifts (incl in-kind)	80.00	250.00	100.00	180.00
Subscriptions	140.00	150.00	130.00	150.00
Bread & Roses Donation to SNZ	1000.00	1000.00	1000.00	1000.00
Total Street Newz Revenue	1727.45	2160.00	1865.50	1962.50
Street Newz Expenses				
Salaries	1000.00	1000.00	1000.00	1000.00
Paper & Printing Costs	565.95	565.95	565.95	549.15
Office expenses/website	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Postage	69.84	72.32	73.12	74.65
Ttl Street Newz Expenses	1635.79	1638.27	1639.07	1723.80
Street Newz	91.66	521.73	226.43	238.70
Bread & Roses Revenue				
Grants	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Bread & Roses Revenue	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bread & Roses Expenses				
Bus Tickets (2 for 1)	40.50	40.50	40.50	40.50
Street Newz Donation	1000.00	1000.00	1000.00	1000.00
Ttl Bread & Roses Expenses	1040.50	1040.50	1040.50	1040.50
Bread & Roses	-1040.50	-1040.50	-1040.50	-1040.50
Consolidated Ttl (SNZ + B&R)	-948.84	-518.77	-814.07	-801.80
Bread & Roses Bank Balance	4730.50	4078.02	3307.69	2402.83

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